

IN SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

FEBRUARY 22, 1845.

Submitted, and ordered to be printed.

Mr. WOODBRIDGE made the following

REPORT:

The Committee on Public Lands, to which was referred the "petition of a number of citizens of Indiana, praying the correction of an error in the surveys of the public lands in White county, in that State," ask leave to report :

That they have considered the subject-matter of the said petition, and consulted the Commissioner of the General Land Office on the subject of complaint. The prayer of the petition is confined to the object of causing the errors complained of to be corrected. Without further interposition of the legislative authority, it is apprehended that the proper department is, under the general provisions of the land laws, legally competent to cause the specific errors complained of to be corrected; and your committee are gratified to learn, as will appear by the subjoined letter of the Commissioner of the General Land Office, that measures have already been taken to make that correction.

Your committee deeply lament the recklessness of consequences which appears too often to have characterized the action of deputy surveyors of remote land districts, in their surveys and returns of surveys, and which would seem so often and so justly to have been obnoxious to the charge of gross errors, or of imperfect or false returns; but, nevertheless, considering that the object of the petitioners is in the way of being attained without the specific action of Congress on the subject, they respectfully ask to be discharged from the further consideration of the subject.

GENERAL LAND OFFICE,

January 31, 1845.

SIR: In answer to your communication of the 29th instant, I have the honor to inform you, that, on examining the plat and field notes of the survey of the line between sections twenty-five and thirty-six, township twenty-eight north, range four west of second principal meridian, Indiana, the survey appears to have been correctly made, and the half-mile post fixed equidistant between the section corners, as required by law. I am inclined to think that the petitioners are in error, or that the half-mile post

has been moved, as the bearing trees are fully described ; but, that the matter may be finally determined, I have this day directed the surveyor general to have the line examined, and, if the alleged error exists, to have it rectified, and the half-mile post fixed as the law requires, and report the facts to this office. This is all that the petitioners ask in this case, and consequently there is no necessity for legislation on the subject.

The only plan that I think would be likely to prevent frauds in the surveys, in future, would be for Congress to pass a law declaring the making or returning of false or fraudulent field notes of surveys a felony, and affixing to it the penalty of fine and imprisonment ; that the penalty in their bond should be recovered by summary process ; and that the act of limitation should either not apply or be extended to seven years in such cases.

The petition of Mr. Downey and others is herewith returned.

With great respect, your obedient servant,

THOMAS H. BLAKE,
Commissioner.

HON. WILLIAM WOODBRIDGE,
Senate United States.

The Committee on Public Lands to which the petition of Mr. Downey and others was referred, have considered the subject matter of the said petition, and consulted the Commissioner of the General Land Office on the subject of the same. The prayer of the petition is copied in the object of the errors complained of to be corrected. Without further information of the legislative authority, it is recommended that the proper department be referred to the consideration of the said laws, legally competent to cause the specific errors complained of to be corrected, and your committee are granted to learn, as will appear by the subjoined letter of the Commissioner of the General Land Office, that measures have already been taken to make that correction.

Your committee deeply lament the recklessness of consequences which appears too often to have characterized the action of deputy surveyors of remote land districts, in their surveys and returns of surveys, and which would seem so often and so justly to have been objections to the state of gross errors, or of imperfect or false returns, but nevertheless, considering that the object of the petitioners is in the way of being attained with the specific action of Congress on the subject, they respectfully ask to be discharged from the further consideration of the subject.

GENERAL LAND OFFICE,

January 31, 1845.

Sir: In answer to your communication of the 25th instant I have the honor to inform you that on examining the plat and field notes of the survey of the line between sections twenty-five and thirty-six township twenty-eight north, range four west of second principal meridian, T62N, E24R, the survey appears to have been correctly made, and the half-mile post fixed equidistant between the section corners as required by law. I am inclined to think that the petitioners are in error, or that the half-mile post